

PARENTS AREN'T BORN WITH ALL THE ANSWERS!

There is no “one size fits all” when it comes to raising children.

What children need and how they respond to a parenting style varies from child to child. Understanding child development may help you to have fewer frustrations and understand your children better by:

- **Having realistic expectations of what your children can and cannot do at certain ages.**
- **Recognize when children's behaviors are “typical” for their age—or a cause for concern.**
- **Choosing a response that matches the unique needs of your children. What “worked” at age 2 may not “work” at age 5.**
- **Dealing positively with your children during each stage of their development.**

SOME TIPS TO HELP

INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT.

Look for opportunities and resources to learn more about child development. Many programs, schools or churches offer parent education courses or have materials on child development to share.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

You don't want to frustrate yourself or your children by expecting what is beyond their ability, like expecting a two-year-old to tie a shoe. At the same time, you want to foster growth by allowing children to “do things on their own,” like zipping up a coat at age 3. So...

- Set expectations that are within your children's reach.
- Motivate your children toward independence.

MOVE BEYOND “BECAUSE I SAID SO.”

Teaching children cause and effect and helping them to see other possibilities is important for their independence.

- Talk to your children about the expectations you have and why they exist.
- Let your children know up front what will happen if they meet—or do not meet—your expectations.



LEARN AS YOU GO.

Build a “tool box” of parenting strategies. Having alternative ways to deal with children’s challenging behaviors can help parents be effective while avoiding harsh punishments.

- Know that parenting strategies need to be adjusted as children grow.
- What “works” for one child may not be what “works” for another.
- Be willing to be flexible but stay firm when it’s important.

RECOGNIZE “THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT WAY TO BE A PARENT.”

How we parent is often a very personal choice. Take the time to think about the kind of parent you want to be.

- What values do you want to teach your children?
- How do you want your children to remember you?
- Think about how you were parented—what did your parents do that was helpful, or what would you choose not to repeat?

READ, TALK, LISTEN.

You can find parenting advice, ideas and resources in many different ways:

- Look for books, articles, Internet resources and classes.
- Ask parents and early childhood educators for ideas.
- Use the suggestions and tips that suit your style and the needs of your child.

RESOURCES

2-I-I. For additional information **DIAL 2-I-I** and connect to community resources for your family.

www.ConnectCommunitySupport.org. Go to this website for information about Strengthening Families in Westwood and Cheviot. Learn about this initiative, access local resources or **JOIN A PARENT CAFÉ.**

strengthening families

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Connect. Community. Support.

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